

Message Text

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TAGS: OAS, SHUM

SUBJECT: OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL VOTES TO EXTEND INVITA-
TIONS TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
CHURCHES OF CHRIST AND COUNCIL OF AMERICAS

REF: STATE 138217

1. AFTER EXTENSIVE DEBATE, OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL AT
ITS REGULAR SESSION JUNE 7 VOTED TO APPROVE REQUESTS
FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
CHURCHES OF CHRIST AND COUNCIL OF AMERICAS FOR
"SPECIAL INVITEE" STATUS AT VIII GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
VOTE ON REQUEST OF AMNESTY WAS CLOSEST AT 15 FOR,
FOUR AGAINST (ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, PARAGUAY, URUGUAY)
AND SIX ABSTENTIONS (BOLIVIA, CHILE, EL SALVADOR,
GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA). SOMEWHAT
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PAGE 02 STATE 145949

SURPRISINGLY, VOTE FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
OF CHRIST WAS EVEN MORE LOPSIDED AT 17 FOR (WITH
GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS SLIPPING INTO YES CAMP) 3
AGAINST AND 5 ABSTENTIONS. COUNCIL OF AMERICAS
REQUEST APPROVED OVERWHELMINGLY 19-2-4.

2. IN COOPERATION WITH VENEZUELA AND ANGLOPHONE

CARIBBEAN, US DELEGATION LOBBIED VIGOROUSLY IN FAVOR OF APPROVAL OF ALL REQUESTS FOR "SPECIAL INVITEE" STATUS. ON MORNING OF VOTE, ATTITUDE OF ECUADOR, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND HAITI WITH REGARD TO AMNESTY REQUEST APPEARED DOUBTFUL. IN DOMINICAN CASE, US AND VENEZUELA OPENED MEETING WITH TRIBUTE TO DR ELECTION AS TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, WHICH MAY HAVE SWAYED THAT VOTE. GRENADIAN HELPED BRING HAITIAN DELEGATE AROUND TO SURPRISING "YES" VOTE ON AMNESTY.

3. OUTCOME OF LONG TRAIN OF PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVER AND DEBATE OVER APPARENTLY MINOR QUESTION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL INVITEES BODES WELL FOR GA. ALTHOUGH DEBATE CONCERNED LEGAL SUBTLETIES OF OBSCURE PORTION OF GA RULES OF PROCEDURE, BASIC ORIENTATION OF OAS WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS WAS ISSUE IN MOST DELEGATIONS' MINDS. ALTHOUGH HUMAN RIGHTS PER SE WERE RARELY MENTIONED IN DEBATE, MANY DELEGATIONS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT IMAGE OF OAS IF AMNESTY REQUEST WERE TURNED DOWN. FINAL VOTE SHOWED THAT SOLID MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF STRONG OAS INVOLVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS CONTINUES TO EXIST. WITH THIS FACT CLEARLY ESTABLISHED BY JUNE 7 VOTE, WE HOPE WAY WILL BE OPEN FOR CONSTRUCTIVE AND NON-CONFRONTATIONAL CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES ON VIII GA AGENDA.
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PAGE 03 STATE 145949

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